

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 SS-15 INR-10 RSR-01 RSC-01 /071 W
----- 013020

P R 231545 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8909

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0946

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, MOPS, RH, ZA

SUBJECT: MAY 15 BORDER SHOOTING INCIDENT

REF: LUSAKA 925

1. CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOLLOWING MESSAGE
BE PASSED TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS . ASAP

2. QUOTE: EXTERNAL OTT (GAA CRO). SUBJECT: DEATH OF
CANADIAN TOURISTS. LEITH CONFIRMS RHODESIAN POLICE WHO WERE
IN CHARGE RESCUE OPERATIONS PROVIDED FREE ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL
PRESS IN ALL INVESTIGATIONS SAVE WITHOLDING IDENTIFY AND PRESENCE
OF TWO UNIDENTIFIED WITNESSES WITH WHOM LEITH SPOKE TUES AM.
REASONS WERE THAT TWO HAD FAMILIES IN ZAMBIA. LEITH CONSIDERS
INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPORTS FROM RHODESIA REASONABLY ACCURATE.

3. WITNESSES SAW PARTY DESCENDING GORGE ABOUT NOON MAY 15
CARRYING WHAT APPEARED TO BE SHOULDER BAGS FOR LUNCH AND LATER
IN AFTERNOON HEARD SHOOTING BUT DID NOT RPT NOT CONNECT TWO
OCCURRENCES. THEY APPROACHED POLICE ABOUT 11 PM MON EVENING
WHILE RESCUE PARTY WAS IN GORGE RETRIEVING CROTHERS FAMILY.
INCIDENT DISCUSSED WITH CROTHERS IN PRIVATE MON AFTER MEMORIAL
SERVICE. CROTHERS RECRUPERATING WELL, HAVING BANDAGES REMOVED
FROM EYES AND LEGS STILL IN TRACTION. WHILE VERY CALM OUTWARDLY
STILL EMOTIONALLY UPSET. HE CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS NO RPT NO
PROVOCATION FOR INCIDENT AS FAR AS HE KNEW. HIS DESCRIPTION OF
ZAMBIAN FORCES WAS CONFINED TO FOUR LETTER WORDS; HOWEVER, HE
FELT THAT INCIDENT WAS ACT OF A SMALL UNTHINKING GROUP. AS TO
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IDENTITY OF ORIGIN OF SHOTS BOTH MR. AND MRS. CROTHERS SAY THEY SAW WORKMEN AND PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT COLORED UNIFORMS AROUND POWER HOUSE AND WHEN FIRING STARTED MADE NO RPT NO ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY ARMY, PARA- MILITARY OR POLICE. CROTHERS STATED NONE OF PARTY HAD BEEN IN WATER OTHER THAN HIMSELF WHEN RUNNING FOR COVER. POLICE REPORT ON SINCLAIR CLOTHING CONFIRMS NO RPT NO EVIDENCE OF RIVER WATER ON SHOES OR TROUSERS.

4. DRIJBER PARENTS ARRIVED BULAWAYO 3:30 PM SUN AND HAD HALF HOUR WITH LEITH IN CAMERA AT SUGGESTION OF RHODESIAN AUTHORITIES. PARENTS WHILE VERY TIRED APPEARED BITTER THOUGH OUTWARDLY CALM. HER FIRST QUESTIONS CONCERNED MUTUAL FRIENDS AT MINDOLO ECUMENICAL CENTRE IN ZAMBIA AND BOTH CONSIDERED INCIDENT ISOLATED FROM MAJORITY INTENTIONS OF ZAMBIAN PEOPLE.

5. AFTER BRIEFING BY POLICE SUN EVENING AND VIEW OF SITE MON AM DRIJBERS ACCEPTED FACT DAUGHTER COULD NOT RPT NOT HAVE SURVIVED AND ATTENDED MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BOTH GIRLS IN WANKIE. LEITH SPENT EVENING WITH FAMILY AND BREAKFAST TUES MORNING PROVIDING THEM WITH DAUGHTERS EFFECTS AND COUNSELLING MR. DRIJBER ACTION TO BE TAKEN WITH RHODESIANS TO CLEAR DAUGHTER' S ESTATE.

6. COMMENTS CPTWN TELS. 361 MAY 21: TEXT OF TEL CORRECT. ALLEGATIONS OF ZAMBIAN GOVT PROVIDED IN FORM OF ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL OF SAT MAY 19. POLICE CONFIRMED GROUND SEARCH OF CANYON DOWNSTREAM FOUR TIMES FOR DISTANCE 2000 YARDS AND AIR SEARCH BY SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE CESSNA WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL END THIS WEEK. THEY HYPOTHEZIZE THAT IF BODY DOES NOT RPT NOT RISE IN TWO WEEKS IT M
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ACTION AF-18

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TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8910

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 0946

8. RHODESIAN RECEPTION AND CONDUCT THROUGHOUT VISIT VERY HELPFUL BUT CORRECT PROVIDING ESCORTS AND CONTACT POINTS. MFA REP FOGARTY COURTEOUS AND CORRECT NOT RPT NOT WISHING TO EMBARRASS LEITH. HE AVOIDED ORAL CONTACT UNTIL ALL PRESS HAD DEPARTED FOR INQUEST TUES MORNING. HE EXPRESSED OFFICIAL RHODESIAN OPINION THAT FALLS AREA CANNOT RPT NOT AFFORD TO BE POINT OF TENSION BY

EITHER ZAMBIA OR RHODESIA AS TOURIST ATTRACTION PROVIDES LARGE SOURCE OF FOREIGN INCOME TO BOTH AND FACT ZAMBIAN POWER STATION PROVIDES ALL POWER FOR FALLS AND WANKIE COAL COMPLEX ON RHODESIAN SIDE. WHEN ASKED OF STRATEGIC VALUE ZAMBIAN POWER HOUSE TO RHODESIA HE REPLIED THAT RHODESIA STILL HAD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OF KARIBA IN ITS HANDS.

9. KAUNDA' S STATEMENTS OF MAY 22 FOR BENEFIT WALDHEIM AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPORTED OUR TEL 420 MAY 23. WE SHOULD POINT OUT THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED EVERY COOPERATION FROM OFFICIALS IN RESPECT TO LEITH' S DEPARTURE FROM AND ENTRY TO ZAMBIA AND ALSO IN RESPECT TO OUR REQUEST THAT ZAMBIAN AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT RPT NOT IN ANY WAY OBSTRUCT RESCUE OPERATIONS BY RHODESIANS IN GORGE. ON OTHER HAND NEITHER WE NOR AMERICANS HAVE RECEIVED ANY EXPLANATIONS PERSONALLY OR OFFICIALLY ON TRAGEDY.

10. WHATEVER MERITS OF CASE MAY BE WE SHOLD ADD THAT RHODESIANS IRRESPONSIBILITY IN WHOLE AFFAIR NOT RPT NOT REPORTED IN THEIR PRESS INVOLVES THEIR NOT RPT NOT INFORMING EITHER THEIR PEOPLE OR TOURISTS OF TENSION THEY KNOW TO EXIST ON ZAMBIAN SIDE. IN ADDITION IT MUST HAVE APPEARED UNUSUAL TO ZAMBIANS TO SEE ANYBODY IN A STEAMING, OVER 90 DEGREES FARENHEIT GORGE ENGAGING
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IN COMPLETELY INNOCENT ACTIVITY. BROADBRIDGE. UNQUOTE.
NELSON

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